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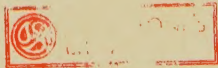
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# THE WOUNDED WORLD

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR :*

CHRIST IS KING

THE KINGDOM AND THE WORLD

THE VOCATION OF ALOYSIUS GONZAGA

THE MIND OF THE MISSAL

TRAVELLER'S PRAYER



# THE WOUNDED WORLD

*A COURSE OF SERMONS  
PREACHED IN FARM ST. CHURCH  
By C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.  
DURING LENT, 1928*



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## TO THE BISHOP OF BRENTWOOD

MY DEAR LORD,

I fear that there is no intrinsic reason at all in this tiny book to explain my having asked your permission to dedicate it to you, your diocese, and your new parishes in particular.

My only excuse for doing so is that you so kindly showed me the map of your diocese and pointed out how enormous already was its development and how still vaster it was soon to be.

I was appalled merely to look at these new districts upon a map, foreseeing the hundreds of thousands of inhabitants soon to be domiciled where five years ago there was hardly a house. I thought of the new churches, presbyteries, schools, halls that you would have to build; of the devoted enthusiasm that your laity would need to show. The one bright feature in your task

seemed to me that it was manifestly outside of human nature's powers. Where God asks impossibilities from a man clearly He intends to do most of the work Himself. None the less He wishes us to co-operate up to our maximum.

I have treasured many an anecdote concerning the spirit of your flock and of its shepherds. In Australia, I told one audience of "diggers" after another, of that Walthamstow priest and his congregation who devote their evenings to the digging of foundations. As we steamed home up the Thames I kept thinking of the priests who work in your river-side parishes—and lo! one of them actually came out on a tug to meet me. Custom House and its Seamen's Institute would be enough, by themselves, to make me want to tell everyone about that part of your apostolate. (Not that I was forgetting the south side too; but one can't talk of everything at the same time.) To fly over the raw red Paris outside the old "black zone," all of it new since the war, and to read "*Le Christ dans la Banlieue*," by Fr.

Lhande, about those derelict millions, is sufficiently full of anguish to keep one awake at night, did it not do better—make one pray more earnestly: but you, too, almost without resources, have to cope with the abrupt apparition of whole new towns the size of Southampton and their spiritual needs.

So, wanting to do some small thing quickly as I could, I asked to offer you these pages, feeling sure that anyone who read them would at least pray for you, your clergy, your nuns, your school-teachers, your children, your barracks, your docks, your poor, and all your men and women, and hoping that if possible they would lend a hand—I don't know how—to the work. Anyhow, I hope you will accept this dedication as a tiny gesture which, being of no real use, will yet express something of the use I would like to be.

Obediently yours in Christ,

C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

*London, 1929.*





## BLINDED MEN

*O that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His throne! . . . But if I go to the East, He appeareth not; if to the West, I shall not understand Him. If to the left—what shall I do? I shall not take hold on Him. If I turn to the right hand, I shall not see Him. Job xxiii.*

Not long ago, an independent observer described the University of Oxford as composed of three thousand young men, all looking for a religion and not knowing where to find one. A good many out of the three thousand might have felt rather astonished to hear themselves thus described: they had not imagined that they were exactly hunters after holiness, nor even in quest of a creed.

Yet while it is possible to be consciously looking for something, and to be unable to find it, it is also possible to be, quite without knowing it, uneasy, anxious, not at home in life, for lack of something that, did you

know it, would turn out to be a Faith. Even the pagan philosopher said, more than two thousand years ago: "Perhaps men are actually pursuing, not what they think, nor what they would say, but a selfsame thing. For all things by nature possess something that is divine."

We must begin by being absolutely certain that human nature never stands still. Indeed, whatever we can say of created things, we cannot ever call them inert. They tend and strain towards something. Man does so in particular—even the laziest man. Always the human mind needs to know *something*: always the will wants something and we try to get it. Put it quite at the lowest—we have at least the instinct for self-preservation; and who has not heard offered as argument even for what looks like crime—"Well, a man *must live*": "Well, after all, I couldn't starve." I said: "what looks like crime," for so radical in nature is the demand to live, that a starving man has the right to take that as *due* to him, the taking of which, in a different man, would constitute a theft. And besides the instinct for self-preservation, there is that for self-extension, and the identification of yourself with property, which is scarcely less radical in nature, if at all; and also, that for self-

reproduction. But above all, the mind is such as necessarily to want at least a certain amount of truth; and the will has an appetite for what is felt, at least, to be "good." "O that I knew . . . O that I could obtain."

In the long run, there is nothing in the line of Truth that will satisfy the mind, save God; nothing, by way of Good, that will satisfy the will or the heart, save God. For till you reach the Ultimate, that from which all flows, that on which all depends, that to which all tends, you still feel yourself to be fumbling, to be able to reach out still somehow further, to be hanging by you know not what thread over you know not what abyss. Still are your eyes full of darkness; still are you cold and hungry. In a created thing that is intelligent and free, this cannot be otherwise: God cannot but create save in order that His creatures, by becoming their true selves, should minister thus to His own glory; and the true self of the intelligence is reached when it knows Truth without error, and of the will, when it undeviatingly adheres to, and is happy in, the Good.

I have spoken thus at the beginning, that from the very outset we may tear up by the roots from our mind any idea that religion is something alien to nature; something that

conflicts with nature as such. It is not even a set of strings that pull nature about as a marionette may be pulled: nor a frame of steel and plaster within which nature is packed or crushed or distorted. It is true, as I shall say in a moment, that God's super-natural grace imparts to human nature what it would never have had without it: but even so, as the medieval schoolmen wrote: *Gratia sequitur Naturam*—Grace attends on, keeps pace with, ever exquisitely adapts itself to nature. God wills not to save nature in spite of or in defiance of nature: but in and through nature: and if there is any defiance or "in spite of" in the process, it is, that Grace defies and attacks what is hostile to true human nature, and thrives in spite of the impoverishments or sicknesses of human nature.

None the less, St. Paul (whose vision swept so far beyond that of our modern evolutionists as Destiny is beyond Origin) contemplated, he too, the stress and strain of things, and saw it in that Universe of ours which, says he in a text never too often quoted, is "groaning and travailing together," that is, in all its many parts, "towards the *full* revelation of the sons of God" (Ro. viii, 19). When God made man "in His image and in His likeness," a likeness

not pictorial merely, but due to the fact that man is *spirit* no less truly than he is *body*, a true sonship was revealed; and indeed, when the Scripture proceeds to relate the begetting of Seth by Adam, that same phrase, "to his likeness, in his image," is re-used. But incomparably more profound, more "full," is the sonship, when by Grace we have become brothers of Jesus Christ, co-sons along with Him, and with Him co-heirs. Christianity therefore desires and professes not to diminish in you at all your manhood or your womanhood, but to insert something into your sheer humanity which will bring it to perfection, natural and supernatural alike.

And in particular, Christ, who came "not to destroy, but to fulfil," not only has no intention of abolishing your intelligence, but wishes to better it. He says that it is all wrong, according to God-created nature herself, that we should be in a hopeless confusion of mind with regard to all that lasts and matters. Yet that is what we are, and not alone about religion. You observe the press, and the public, hesitating as to whether a mother may kill her sick and suffering child; a girl, her aged and suffering parent: and you observe popular demonstrations of enthusiasm on the side which Catho-

lics hold to be the wrong one. You read one opinion after another as to whether criminal lunatics should be executed, or again, sterilised. Lunatics? to members of almost every class, hastily judged undesirable by some State or its departmental officials, has that remedy, which is no remedy because purely destructive, been applied. It is questioned whether this sort of child or that should be allowed to live: and social reformers are already standing helplessly aghast at the practical issue of the insane doctrines regarding artificial birth-restriction that have been propagated these last years; aghast, because they see, quite rightly, that there is no possible method of checking what even they agree to be a fashion as demoralising as it is unscientifically based and racially disastrous. Among those who desire social stability or improvement, it is the rarest thing in the world to find a man who really seeks so much as a principle for his opportunist views. I continually recall the doctor who, in a shell-shock hospital, insisted that I, not he, was the man to cure his patients; for, said he, they do not and they cannot get well, since they have no principles of life nor any motives that shall make them re-begin to live. "Why," I asked, "do *you* not give them some?" "What are

we?" he answered. "Experimentalists." He was emphatic as to the value of a belief in God. "You," he continued, "feel you can assure them that there is one. But what do *I* know about that? I could bluff them; but no man can keep on bluffing all the while. Not even," he added sadly, "bluffing himself."

It is of course in what concerns the really ultimate things, God, the soul, the meaning of life, the upshot and destiny of the world, that confusion is worst, just because the principles have most been lost. I take it that no one tries to run a business save on *some* principles. Even to-day, in ordinary life you do not care to be called "unprincipled," and you avoid dealing with men who are so, at least in what concerns your reputation or your pocket. But in religion—why, there is nothing upon which men will agree upon as to its very origin or sanction. I look towards authority, only to be told that in religion at least each man lives to himself and his God alone: I observe the individualist, and I see that no man is so lonely. They tell me to think and to use my head; and I might retort with Pascal that the heart has reasons that the head knows nothing of: and when I turn towards the heart, to religious feeling and impressionism, I am reminded

that only the heart knows its own bitterness, and nothing disgusts men so much as religious sentimentalism. I have recourse once more to the massive dignity of tradition, and I find that nothing after all is immobile; and I appeal in desperation for revolution, only to find that in history revolution has proved sterile. And I am rebuked as an extremist, and am adjured to tread the middle path of gradual progress; and then I have to take leave to doubt whether the world offers the slightest suggestion of more than local or temporary improvement, and whether the course of humanity be not much rather a spiral, a zigzag, than orderly progression, or whether indeed there be anything that can be called a Course of Humanity at all, and whether I can descry, in human records, more than a patchy intensification and elaboration of life, then its hesitation, its halting, and its hurrying to decay.

It is much if we do not reach to the very verge of despair, as Job did, when confronted with his own personal "problem of Evil," as we call it—the problem constructed for him by the fact of his suffering, and the fact of his innocence, since he started and his friends started from the premiss that suffering, surely, was the punishment inflicted



by God upon the guilty. His friends concluded that Job, whatever he might assert, had sinned: Job, indeed, after passing through every phase of misery up to the very verge of cursing God, ended in that recognition of the absolute justice of his Righteous God, which must necessarily triumph in the end. This was all that the partial revelation of his day permitted to him. But it is hard indeed for men of our day, who have lost grip even upon that partial revelation, that minimum of conviction, to do other than despair, or shelve the problem. "O that I knew where I might find Him, and come even to His throne!" I go towards the East, but I meet there no sunrise: I travel to the West, and such light as I have, sets there in mist—I shall not understand. If I look to the left, I shall not lay hold on Him—I shall not grasp your doctrine: if I turn to the right, I shall not see Him—I cannot *see . . .*

Possibly you will give yourselves a shake, and exclaim that as a matter of fact, people are not like that: life is not thus harassed: true, things are puzzling enough, and what the outcome will be, who knows? But at any rate, we propose to meet it with a stiff lip, be it death itself, and an unknown beyond. Well, of course. It is never the

*easier* alternative to burrow below a surface. Even though we do not deliberately prefer a crass imperceptiveness, and turn our eyes obstinately from that which lies behind the scenery and the uproar of the orchestra, who does not know what it is to be, on the one hand, so "alive," so interested in, so pleased with and welcomed by the immediate and the superficial, and again, so tired by trying, by probing, that we do not so much as want to get any further, or have given up wanting to? For as people get older, far from finding life adventuresome, they find it customary, and it is a relief to take things as they come. They have exchanged a spur for a cushion. But the very fact of those innumerable new gospels, and new enterprises for bettering things, that we see all round us, the astounding readiness with which people read or listen to any notable person whatsoever who consents to tell in the Sunday papers what his or her religion is—be they daring novelists or facetious chemists, or starry actresses—all this does witness to a vital energy towards "truth" and "the better" which is significant and which we cannot possibly despise.

Hence we can try to be glad of and praise so far as we possibly can, what begins by exasperating us—I mean, all those shoddy-seeming movements for transforming the

world by means of a new art or theatre, or gardening, or deep-breathing and so forth; all those happy thoughts, and earnest persons, and oracular undergraduates. Because without any doubt those who go in for these things feel quite sure that they have got hold of something real; they are convinced that they "know" a new thing, and are eager to prove it to you. And they *do* "go in" for the gardening or deep breathing—some even go in for keeping silence—there is an entire League, or was, for this in Kensington, which I have permitted myself tactfully to recommend. Now how much better is that than inertia! How very much better than taking everything, and giving nothing. How sporting, how chivalrous, how crusading, compared to those of us who just submit to our religion, rehearse with our lips the dogmas that beat on our eardrums and are retained by our memories but are never fastened on by our *thought*; those who go through what I might call the knee-drill of the Church, and end by marking time perfectly and even noisily, but do not advance nor get anywhere in particular, let alone help others to do so. Those others have discovered a gospel, and they are eager to impart it. They are often a horrible nuisance; but the Apostles themselves must have

been rather upsetting persons to meet—and as for St. Paul . . . .

Since this is Lent, we have every reason for examining our consciences, and resenting any soft doctrine. Merely to criticise is, of course, barren: or, it may be worse; when one has criticised and condemned another, one feels serene and half a hero. But I would ask two questions.

Are we always just to our fellow-men who look anxiously towards us, if by chance we may be able to enlighten them? and are we always just towards ourselves? We are, too often, neither the one nor the other. I will say a word on the latter point first.

Religion at school is taught as it *can* be taught to boys and girls, and, it stands to reason, not as it can be to adults with developed minds. After we leave school, no one will teach us anything, unless we either seek a teacher or act as our own teacher. Few do this. Detestable as it is to see people who profess themselves “interested in” religion, without believing in any religion, it is deplorable and dangerous to be people who believe in religion but are not in the least interested in it. Moreover, the phenomenon is in itself astounding. Of all topics, none can possibly compare with religion, for interest. The moment one says it does not

interest one, it is one's self one condemns. No slightest criticism is passed upon religion, but I repeat, on ourselves, if we have to own that our minds for some reason are shut to the mental, moral, historical, mystical, artistic, social fascination of that most rich of imaginable facts, religion. Absolutely nothing that is or has been or can be, is excluded or can be excluded from its sweep. I suppose the only explanation is, that we have allowed things to come to such a pass, that having acquired a technical outline-knowledge, and a minimum code, we have not sought to develop this or to fill it out or to keep it on a level with everything else that composes our life. I agree readily that the fault is only half our own: for how easy is it made for a man from adolescence upwards to find what *does* interest him reaching him wholly from non-Christian—I don't say anti-Christian—sources. A book *L'Ascension*, by a French working-man, makes this very point, and what is true for him is true for nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand. When, as a small boy, he left the care of nuns, no really *interesting* topic, after a very short while, was reaching his ears or mind save through non-religious channels. What mainly interested him, naturally, was the condition of life which

was his as a Parisian working-man: but how this branched off into the social and moral and domestic and even philosophical and artistic worlds! And how, in these, no one spoke to him about what concerned him so as—not to “drag religion in,” as we say, but at least to make him feel that the back of his informant’s mind was steeped in his Faith, and that this Faith sent its influences forward and imparted a greater interest, a greater value, to what was being said on quite general topics. This is the true method, and reflects the proper Catholic life—we ought not to be leading a life of general interests *plus* religion: but, *being* Christians, taking as by a second nature Christ’s standpoint, view, estimate of each and every thing, we ought to find all those things as transfigured as a stained glass window is when seen from within, as a lantern is when its light is lit.

Since this does not happen, and too often we do not give it the chance of happening, we cannot possibly fulfil our duty towards our neighbour. As for ridding ourselves of responsibility towards our neighbour, that is out of the question. The first man to ask: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” was also the first murderer, and out from human society God thrust him. Of this I say a word in a

later sermon of this course. But I am sure that you see that we still need and still have not got what I will call a Catholic literature, a Catholic art, a Catholic civilisation, in short. Yes; and we are behindhand in getting it, partly because we explicitly and definitely think that our religion is somehow a separate thing, resulting in our asserting certain truths and keeping or trying to keep certain rules, and not a thing that soaks all through us or rather animates us wholly so that all that we say, do or think or feel is Christianised—Christ-colour: and partly because we think in consequence that Catholic books or art or talk and so forth are the affair of expert priests or of a tiny minority of ecclesiastical-minded laity—and the consequence of this is very often that we have a separate Catholic element in ourselves and allow all the rest of ourselves not only to seem but to be exactly like everybody else—and finally, because our personal vision of what it means to be a Catholic is so very dim. It does not occur to us that because we are Catholic Christians there is a *way* of looking at everything in the wide world, from hospitals to theatres, from wages to dividends, from dress to foreign politics. Have I said that you ought to dress dowdily because you are Catholics? not go to theatres? not accept



dividends? go to war with Mexico? I haven't said any one of these things nor anything remotely like them. What has Christianity to do with dowdiness, for example? But, if you are thoroughly alive, if your nature is permeated throughout itself with anything whatsoever, you will necessarily take up an attitude congenial to that nature towards everything in the world. Well, do we? It is worth asking ourselves the question.

In conclusion, pray, I beg you, for nothing short of a new Pentecost. An outpouring of God's Spirit on this world and this country and this city, and the heart of each of you. "In Thy Light shall we see light." You will never acquire, let alone impart, that Light by artificial struggle. The thing must be a gift: a free gift of God; a gift you cannot earn; but a gift that you may provoke or persuade God into giving you. Let us begin with ourselves, and implore the continual healing of our blindness, so that all the earth becomes God's Throne, so that whether I look to the east, and see God's dawn, or to the west, and find the steady shining of His Star, to right and to left alike I shall behold Him, and shall understand Him, and shall lay hold of Him and never let Him go.



## II

### CRIPPLED SOULS

*O that I were as in the months of old, as in the days when God watched over me! When His Lamp shined over my head, and I walked by His Light in the darkness . . . when God was secretly in my tabernacle. Job xxix.*

In my last sermon I said that the world was sick, because it was in such mental chaos, and God had not created it to be like that. God never meant it to be asking itself hopelessly questions concerning ordinary behaviour, about the rights and wrongs of suicide, about the killing of your fellow-man, and so forth. Still less did God mean us not only to be in the dark about Himself, but not so much as know the direction in which to look for Him.

In this sermon I want to turn to that other power that is ours—the Will. Possibly you know that writers have declared that Free Will is a Jesuit invention. It is not, though

some of the earliest controversies into which the Jesuits were forced concerned the Will. This was partly due to the Jansenists and their friends insisting that man's will was so spoilt by sin as to be practically unable to use itself aright. Of course the reformers had gone much further, and had regarded human nature as so totally corrupted that all that was in it, was vile, and what is worse, was not healed and made good by God, but was covered up by the merits of Jesus Christ, Men went into heaven as filthy as ever, but covered by His white robe, so that God accepted Christ *instead of* us, and treated us *as if* we were good though we were not really so. All this dates back to St. Augustine, who can be misinterpreted as teaching that man's will was so corrupted by sin as to be no more really free—he didn't teach it, but certainly he sometimes sounded as if he did. This was due partly to the northern heresy of Pelagius which taught that man was wholly self-sufficient and did not need grace at all, not even for the vision of God hereafter: against this Augustine tilted might and main; it was due partly to the deplorable state of things he saw all round him, which made him think that mankind necessarily tended to evil; and above all to his pessimist estimate of himself—he felt that from boy-

hood upwards his nature had prompted him to wrong—to thieving: to lust. And in the long run, the doctrine that sin has enslaved our will altogether is put down to St. Paul, who felt the double law warring in his person, and cried out to be delivered from that which made him do the wrong when he saw the right. And indeed what is more striking than to see that neither the Jews nor the Greeks really had a word for “will” at all?

However, we understand ourselves better as time goes on; and mysterious as the freedom of our will may be, we are aware that we are not machines, that we deserve praise or blame, that there is such a thing as “I ought,” which is quite different from “I must: it would pay: I would like: people expect it of me: I owe it to myself.” This is radical in human nature; and whatever crimes may be put down to the wretched Jesuits, the invention of the Freedom of the Will is not one of them.

But what I think is very important, is that we should realise that though our will is essentially freeable, it does not follow that it is actually free at any given moment. It is rather like having eyesight, but not having been trained actually to notice. The freeing of the will is a very gradual thing in the con-

crete. When we are babies it is not free at all. Our first actions are, I believe, purely reflex. For a long time, we remain instinctive merely. Little by little, we begin to get ideas, and to be conscious of rival motives. I want some chocolate, and can get it, but I know I ought to obey, and can obey, my mother who tells me not to take it. By very slow practice we learn, not merely to submit to coercion, but to control ourselves. One of the greatest of modern fallacies has been to confuse self-control with mere repression, though even self-repression would prove a certain exercise of will. But I beg of you to realise that by practice and only by practice will you get rid of the tyranny of instinct, and indeed of automatism.

Hence at any given moment people may say, and do say, and say with truth: "I *can't* do so and so." "I can't make myself do it: I can't resist doing it."

The modern tragedy is, that they say it much too soon, much too often, and without full sincerity. When they say they can't, they often can. But often, when they really can't, they *ought* not to be thus unable; they ought, had they treated themselves properly, to be far more free than they are. I am very inclined to disbelieve in the idea that you are born with a strong, or with a weak will.

You may be born with an imperfect brain, so that the instrument of your soul is a bad one; but that is quite a different thing from having a congenitally weak will. We become able to use our will quickly and decisively by habit, and habits come by repetition of acts. Therefore, I think you will see at once that the real tragedy after all is not the man or the woman who says: "I can't"; but the one who says: "I don't want to." For how easily corrigible is the mere "cannot!" Almost certainly, it is a mere matter of trying, of practising. But first, comes the difficulty of making a start, and then comes that of going on. All sorts of proverbs exist about the first step being what costs, about the first plunge; and indeed in life you keep seeing people shivering upon the banks of some decision, and you wonder when on earth they are going in, and what can be stopping them. A lot of things may so be stopping them, but most of all, I think, and this will prove important, the fear of committing themselves. So paralysing is our modern scepticism that it has become increasingly difficult to commit yourself to anything whatsoever. Who among average men would sacrifice the whole world for a Perhaps? Poems give you to understand that there was more such quixotic generosity in

days of bygone chivalry, when only the coward or the undeserving "would not put it to the touch to gain or lose it all." But the real point is, that we are to-day sceptical about the worth of what you would gain if you *did* gain it. The knight wanted to do well in tournament or in battle if, at cost of tumble or of wound or even death, he might win his lady's smile or the "well done" of his king. But few want *very much* to do or to risk *very much* when they are no more sure whether there be a lady, or a king! The old Roman said, I think, of Antony: "It does not much matter what this man wants, but whatever he does want, he *wants very much*." "Quidquid vult, valde vult." True, this initial hurling of yourself at a thing may, thus far, reveal little save impetuosity and an inflammable imagination; it is not, indeed it is not *only* the first step that counts, but it is the next one and the next and the interminable tale of paces that remain.

The Church does well to bid us pray explicitly for the virtue of perseverance. Life is full of consolations so far as the sight of good impulses takes one: but it is full of the most puzzling disappointments provided by the inability to stick to things. You see it in all walks of life. You see it in the poor, or

the middlingly poor, when, heaven knows why, they give up the job they had so desperately needed and at last had got. They seem to think it sufficient answer, when you ask why they did so, to say that they became "fed up." Young men at Universities are quite as ready with the same answer in the same words. From the arrangements come to before marriage, you would suppose that really the majority of non-Catholics quite serenely count the likelihood of their getting tired of one another into account. Of course, they say in so many words, "one has to take the possibility of separation later on into one's calculations." I have even known more than one couple who told me, without blinking, that both were agreed that the association was but experimental. Well, I understand quite well, in these nervous and highstrung and hustled days, that sort of panic: anything "for ever and ever" is in itself alarming. You shy away from it. You are quite willing to hold a thing as true and expect always to pursue a line of conduct so long as you aren't committed to it: as you are not bound. The moment the sense of obligation enters in, so does the sense of slavery. This is a very bad look-out indeed.

There is only one more point I wish to

mention, and that is, that a will may be, quite simply, tired. You may feel that you have held out so long as you possibly can. You really have arrived at snapping-point. It is not that rather inferior sensation of being "fed-up": it is downright exhaustion. St. Ignatius felt like that when, after one of his earlier spells of penance, he asked himself, appalled, whether he could go on like this, or at all, for perhaps forty years. Many a young man says to one: "It's all very well. I've managed it so far somehow: but can I possibly keep it up? I'm already feeling at the end of my tether, and I'm only twenty-two."

In all these cases, when people say, quite simply, that they can't: or, that they *just can*, but feel sure they can't sustain the effort, and go on, and go on *always*; or again, in that most difficult case of any, when they are submerged in that enormous listlessness and languour that makes them say—"Well, I suppose I *could*, but I don't particularly *want* to—Oh yes; I see your arguments; but it doesn't seem to me worth it"; or even, "I suppose it's worth it but somehow I can't feel it *matters* much: what does it matter whether I make the most of my life? *Why* should I 'act up' to all those possibilities and ideals that you hang out before me?



I don't *want* to *will*"—it seems to me that a very great tenderness should be used, according to our Lord's ideal, who did not come to break the bruised reed, nor quench the flickering wick. Gentleness does not exclude firmness—gentleness is not softness: but it does exclude all bullying and all nagging—for who would bully the sick? And the lassitude I speak of, and even the paralysis of will, are most certainly sickness, and ailments proper to all elaborate if not over-ripe civilisations.

You will see, anyhow, to take the simplest case first, that the will never can act without a motive. And people think they have none. They used to—they recall the days when they were "fervent": they wanted to be Saints, or to do a lot for Christ, or to conquer a temptation or a habit—it was quite exciting to see yourself improving and able, at last, to keep your temper or even to refrain, when you were very small, from biting your nails. . . . But above all, naturally, I refer to the times when Communion meant a great deal to you, when Benediction was romantic, when you "had a devotion" to this Saint or to that. The Lamp of God shone over your head; you walked by that Light, quite happily, in the darkness proper to everything else; you could move, you

could take risks, you could endure. You knew that in every other loneliness you had God within your tabernacle—you had your secret!

What has happened since then is a dwindling of motive, very largely due to rivalry of motives. As you get older, there are so many more things to do, at first at any rate, and until the novelty has worn off! Merely by dint of being physically stronger, there is so much more in which you can share! there is more liberty; you hear new things spoken of and you find out that you do not get into trouble as you used to if you do wrong things. Attractions are thus reinforced and also multiplied. The soul grows far less simple. But when motives are thus spread out very widely, probably they are weakened in the sense that the stream of your will is more diffused: it makes more of a morass than a canal. I am then quite sure that from boyhood and girlhood up, interesting action ought to be supplied even for the sake of the boy and the girl—I say even for their sake, for I mean unselfish action. When you are children, not much save emotion can be provided to you: it is quite right that sentiment should make aureoles around every part of your religion. When childhood is past, it is not time yet to be doing much

thinking, though from what I said last time you will realise that I hold that we do not supply ideas through Catholic channels nearly frequently or soon enough. But after all, young men and girls are not meant to be brooding philosophers. But they are meant to *use* their strength; and they are meant, being Christians, to use it Christ-wise, and that always is, unselfishly.

I hold that in this department of unselfishness we have been to blame. We have fallen short. We have made of our religion far too folded-back a thing—a private affair of “being good,” saying one’s prayers and going to the sacraments, and the hard work of head or of hand is seldom mentioned by us, though it was so much emphasised by Christ Himself. My small experience leads me to believe that nothing is so thrilling as a piece of really unselfish work. For a young man to experience a rush of gratitude from some poorer, more helpless person, is a revelation to him. But for that he has to see where the need lies: and for that he has to be led to it; and he has to be shown how to help it, and he requires to be backed up in giving his help. I shall say again and again that so long as London is packed with young fellows educated in Catholic schools, to whom it never so much as occurs to fill one evening a

week in downright service of those who have not been educated anywhere, in short, if service as an element in their holidays or their evenings never enters the field of their imagination, the schools that educated them have failed as humanising institutions, and far worse as Christian and as Catholic institutions.

As for the fear of being unable to persevere, here we must be bold, and say that perseverance comes quite simply from persevering. You may have to get over a bad patch—well, one may be sorry you are in it; but if expressions of sympathy are going to tempt you to *soften*, they must not be given, or given only as the Angel helped our Lord even in His agony. We read of that angel as “comforting” Him. How that word has lost its savour! It means, to join in giving strength, and the Greek makes it even clearer—strengthening Him. In our blackest hours, we know that God is certain—*certain*—always to give sufficient strength for the trial. He will not suffer you, says St. Paul, to be tempted above your strength. I have always loved that story of Elias, read as epistle in the Mass of last Wednesday (Wednesday after First Sunday in Lent). Utterly disheartened, the prophet had gone out alone into the desert, and had got rid even

of his servant, and bowed himself down under a juniper tree, and said: "I've had enough. Lord, take away my life. I am no better than my fathers. I am no better than anyone else: I am no better than I was: no one is the better for my having lived or living. I achieve nothing; nothing comes to anything. It suffices for me to touch a thing, for it to fail." And I may say that there is a nobler discouragement than that which comes simply from seeing that one is personally so mediocre. It comes from the realisation of the colossal work to be done in the world, in the country, in this city, for example, and the chill proof that, do what you will, you accomplish scarcely but the stirring of its fringes—perhaps not even that—what little has gone well, would have gone well, had you never moved a finger because of it. You may as well die. . . . And God sent an angel, and he struck the prophet and he cried: "Get up! Eat!" And the poor man raised his head, and saw—well, a dingy minimum: some water, and bread baked under ashes. . . . *Just* enough. Divine generosity might really, you would think, have made wine of that water, and have added a little meat like what the ravens, another time, came carrying. . . . No: just enough. Get up and eat. For you have a

long way still to go! And indeed, in the strength of that food he went forty days and nights, you read, without fainting, even to God's mountain, Horeb, and what is more, he climbed it.

People, then, who feel tired ought first to look quite seriously if they are not trying to do too much. Remember always that there is no virtue whatsoever in sheer activity. Not the mass nor the multitude of your work is going to save you nor to regenerate anything at all, but the character of yourself, the quality of your work, and the union of your will with God so that your work interposes no obstacle to the Holy Spirit. One ought to be quite ready to leave to one side work which, one may have to judge from indications of various sorts, God either wants not to be done at all, or not to be done by you. You can always test yourself with regard to work by seeing whether you would be content that it should be done by another, especially if it would be done better, or whether at all costs you want it to be done by yourself. But I do not want to be drawn into talking about purity of intention and of what really makes a work valuable. I am saying that often one may be genuinely tired, and then one ought to rest, to change one's work, or to pray a little more and ask

God to do what one cannot. But if you judge that the weariness is one of mere disappointment, or pique, or inability to face more monotony, then use a little austerity in your own regard, and stick to it precisely because you do not want to. Persevere as though sheer perseverance were your main object, and indeed in a sense it is. The enduring is very like the Eternal.

With the inertia of which I have spoken, how may we deal? When a man says, or we have to say to our own selves: "Yes—I know all that you can tell me: I know it backwards: I admit all your arguments: I see all that should attract me; but it means nothing to me. I am not attracted. You are putting a meal before a man not in the least hungry. I deny none of the articles of faith; perhaps, even, I commit nothing that you would label "mortal sin." But I experience no response: if I do not apostatise, I suppose it is because nothing comes my way that would make even that worth while." As one wrote to me not long ago: "The curse of my generation is hopelessness. If only I could feel it were worth while, I expect I could do anything!"

I think, for my part, that one can do little directly for such an one, save take all weights off. By that I mean that quite probably he



really has come to feel the Faith and its Law to be but a set of prison bars and chains. Things outside of which he must not think, nor act. Hence a smothering apathy. He has dropped into the state of mind that non-Catholics imagine must be that of all Catholics; and that mighty new Life that our Lord promises and in fact bestows has somehow come to produce an effect of death. Recently I was being criticised by one after another of Oxford Modernists, courteous and indeed flattering as such men are; and yet at the end I was constrained to acknowledge that these men all thought more meanly of God than Catholics do; and far more meanly of man: more meanly of what even ordinary human nature is—for they all seemed to despise the “crude-minded,” as they said, the uncultured, and were prepared to admit that a materialistic religion, as they considered ours to be, was good enough for *them*. And of what human nature, raised and ensouled by Grace, can do, they had manifestly no idea. Therefore at all points were they *less* than the Catholic, in what concerned God, men, and the world at large. But have you never met Catholics who somehow are unaware of their own treasures? who have no *awe* of God—a loving awe, of course, yet a penetrating one that



issues into profoundest worship? or who experience no enthusiasm for the sheer person of Jesus Christ our Lord? who have other historical heroes who mean more to them at least imaginatively? who cannot exult at all in the intellectual beauty of the faith, nor are proud to carry out its concrete ordinances, and know themselves established and expanded and carried high thereby? Of course we have all known such men and women, and their deficiency is only less in kind than that complete soul-anæmia I have been talking of. I fancy that at no time in such lives was the positive aspect of the Catholic Faith familiar. It had always been felt as a set of formulas to be recited, a list of actions to be done or refrained from. Here too, then, a re-education or a sheer education is necessary.

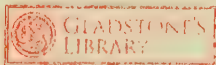
I do not know what can be done for a human nature so wounded—by human means. The vitality will not respond. As, last time, I begged that you would pray for a new Pentecost, so that men should at last see what they look at, and receive yet more sight than they possess, so this time I re-ask it, that power may be given to exhausted personalities to re-act. The Pentecost hymn at Mass is full of exactly what we need. There God's Spirit is spoken of as the Father

of the poor, the Giver of all best gifts, the Light of hearts. He is the best of comforts, and the soul's dear Guest. Peace in our toil, cool in scorching heat, and that kiss upon our tears that alone can staunch them. But better, perhaps, for the purpose of this sermon, is it to hear that He cleanses what is soiled, moistens what is parched, heals what is wounded. That He gently bends the rigid will, gives warmth to what is frozen, directs what has gone crooked. It is an astounding thing to recollect that this Holy Spirit not only comes to us, but dwells in us. For which of you has not been baptised, nor been confirmed? Remember then that it is the Church's dogma that in each baptised and confirmed Christian that Holy Spirit really and specially, howbeit mysteriously, dwells. You can then pray to Him not only as a Person in the Eternal and Infinite Trinity, but as established in the soul of him or of her within whom you want to see new signs of life. Would that we relied more upon this fact. For even should such an one be in mortal sin, so that for the hour he has evicted grace from within him, yet God's most Holy Spirit wishes and yearns to re-enter him, and your prayer does but re-echo His. And if you can but persuade the sufferer to make one inarticulate cry, even,

to the Holy Spirit, the miracle will be accomplished, and indeed I have seen it so to be—and what wonder, when you recall that St. Paul has acknowledged that “we—well, what to pray, or *how*, we know not; but the Spirit Itself joins hands with our weakness, and intercedes for us with groanings beyond all utterance of words, and He who reads what is innermost in hearts knows what is the meaning of the Spirit.” To Him, then, Lord and Giver of Life, we turn, in the hour of our own debilities, and when helpless quite to give vitality to those we love.

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### III

## ORPHANED LIVES

*Hath ever a nation changed their gods, which indeed are no gods? But My people hath changed its glory for an idol Be appalled, ye heavens, at this! for My people hath done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Jer. ii.*

In undertaking to speak of the "wounded world," I meant to imply that though the world was sick enough, yet it was not dead. There is life in it, and the stroke of its wound can be healed. Hence in speaking of that first wound, in its intelligence, and of the second, in its will, I implied very definitely that both intelligence and will are still existing in us, and that it does but remain that we should take steps for their cure. All the more must I not be taken to-day as saying that things are in a hopeless state, and condemning the world at large, the country

at large, people in the mass, as a bad lot and to be held accursed or even to be despised. And I shall say that in so far as the world or the land is sick, it is with a sickness that is curable, and, that we have a responsibility that we cannot rid ourselves of, to join in that curing.

In the absolutely simple, yet how dignified, austere and tragic words I quoted, Jeremias alludes to the fatal tendency of his people to desert the pure monotheistic worship of the Almighty which the prophets so earnestly put before them and which was theirs by ancestral tradition too. They kept crawling greedily back towards the murderous sacrifices of the pagans around them, towards their licentious cults. They kept striking alliances with those pagan kingdoms that always issued into a semi-adoption or at any rate toleration of those cults. The prophet Ezekiel, not long after this, was to see in the very Temple a whole series of groups of idolators, men and women adoring sun and moon, beasts, and men become lower than the beasts. Appalled, he cried that at least the pagans had, in doing thus, been loyal to their ancestral ways of worship—had it ever been known that *pagans* “apostatised”? But as for God’s Chosen People, ever perverse, ever obstinate,

it had forsaken the Fountain of Living Water, and had laboriously excavated cisterns in which at best the water would lie dead and dank, and that even so, says he, in a phrase that has passed into our proverbs, could "hold no water."

Anyone looking at our country to-day will see without the possibility of mistaking it how the very things that the religious revolution of the sixteenth century set out, as it said, to replace upon their throne, are indeed upon their throne to-day, but kept there, as they always had been, by the Catholic Church, and have been in practice dethroned by the heirs of those revolutionists. Thus appeal was constantly made to the Bible, and for generations England educated itself from the Bible, and lived spiritually upon it. To-day, who and who alone safeguards the Bible? The Church and only she. The Bible is not even read any longer by more than a minute fraction of the people, and if there is one claim that non-Catholic critics make as fundamental to their approach, it is, that the Bible must be treated as, and is, an ordinary set of documents exactly like any other. True, criticism, having thirty years ago pretty well decided that no one who was said to have written any ancient book whatsoever, really

did write it, and that the gospels at any rate were not written by those whose names they bear nor anywhere near their time, has crawled laboriously more than half way back to the un-deserted Catholic position, and every item of evidence goes to make the traditional view concerning the Scriptures more easily tenable and defensible upon better and better grounds. But far more deep than what concerns Scripture has gone the wound. We kept being told that Christ was to be reinstated in his rightful place, from which Mary, the Pope, relics, ritual and what not had dislodged Him. But alas, while a certain halo remains about the name of Christ, it is perfectly impossible to assert that this country is consciously a Christian one. Christ, it is said and re-said, is Godlike, and maybe the most Godlike among men whom the world as yet has known. But, as a clergyman critic said some time ago at Oxford, there is nothing to prevent our looking forward to the arising, at any moment, of a man still more Godlike. Hence we have to "adapt" Christ's ideas: we have to free Him from the "limitations" not only of His time and country, but from those intrinsic to Himself—His uninformed mind, His narrower aspirations: we have to enlarge our horizons beyond His. The



ancient beliefs of Christians even as to Christ, must be "re-stated" in terms of the modern mind: the ancient Christian law modified till it suits the modern conscience. Certainly such phrasing is academic, and more proper to the studies of theological colleges or University common-rooms: but it filters into the papers and the popular prints, and affects the whole of our reading middle-class: and as for the poorer classes, it is long since anyone taught them any spiritual thing at all.

The country at large accepted the fundamental notion of the Reform—that the Holy Spirit would teach each individual heart to know all it need know—that neither Pope nor Church was to stand between it and Christ. It was the inevitable outcome of the primitive revolt. Luther appealed from the Pope ill-informed to the Pope better-informed: from the Pope to a Council: from Councils—when he saw that a Council would go against him—to the Bible: from the Bible itself, when he found anything in it that he disliked, to his own conscience—the epistle of St. James was for him an "epistle of straw." But the dregs only of this doctrine have remained. We find a country individualist altogether in religion. After a while, people believed only what they

felt, and then ceased to feel; or at anyrate, they have retained the doctrine that the human heart, even that "common sense," would tell you all you needed; but as for the doctrine that the Holy Ghost would teach you, the average modern man is like those old Ephesians who had not so much as heard "whether there be a Holy Ghost," and would certainly not be able to tell you what was meant by that strange title.

The first part of the prophet's accusation has been verified amongst us: we Catholics hold that God was wholly in Christ, and that Christ continues Himself, organically, vitally, in the Catholic Church: so that they who desert the Church, in the long run realise that they have deserted Christ, and, in deserting Christ, have deserted God. I shall say a word, in a moment, to the effect that not for that has God deserted them: but they have assuredly removed their lips from the Fountain of Living Water, and the result must necessarily be spiritual drought.

It is at once our consolation and our anxiety that the English display so inexhaustible a fertility in inventing religions. Our consolation, for it shows that in them the home-sickness for God is as strong as that home-sickness for the mire of which novelists and psychologists are so fond of talking.

God knows we are all inclined to sink, and that nearly all save Saints have secrets. Or at least, the secrets of the Saints concern those hours of intercourse with God when, as St. Paul says, Communions are established that no words may explain, or again, those hours of dereliction when loneliness and silence are so frightful that words are once more useless and express nothing. But deepest of all in man's soul is that need of God which demands normally some expressions, and which the untutored, as our de-Catholicised race has become, express in stammered syllables that make no sense but witness to those almost instinctive stirrings of the soul. Hence at least in part that crop of sects that men, who do not understand our temperament, deride. You must realise that even the Latin atheist, the fierce Mexican or cynical French or caustic Italian atheist, has a Catholic background to his mind, or substratum in his soul, so that even when he denies God and Christ and is anti-clerical, he knows what he is talking about at least in essence. Not so we. Having lived so long on subjectivism, emotion, impressionism, we suffer fumes to arise from the abysses of our souls which take the vague religious shapes that may later crystallise themselves into sects when they do not evaporate.

It would not become me even were there time, to catalogue the Christian sects and the post-Christian cults of our country and show how, albeit they hold no water, they imply an appreciation of that cool and cleansing thing that water is, and that a shrivelling soul so needs. I said that these non-Catholic manifestations were at once our anxiety and our comfort. Our anxiety, because they are so soon perceived as inadequate, so that people give them up and seek no further, being discouraged: I was told, last time I was in Germany, that this happens there so startlingly: with the collapse of the State Church came an outburst of strange cults, fantastic occultisms and what not, because men need *something*. To such new systems they give themselves over, but they adhere at most for some two years to that which they have joined, and then relapse into an agnosticism from which nothing can extract them. Yet so long as this continues, we have our consolation, for at least it shows that the roots of the soul are not quite dried up, but send forth shoots and feelers that stir and wave blindly around in need of sustenance. I would rather meet the most fantastically religious of men, than the man in whom the very tendency towards God, the very power of understanding that the words "God,"

“soul,” “sin” can mean anything, seem destroyed. And so long as there is this least germ of life in a man or a country, we are encouraged by the prophet himself to *hope*. God is faithful even to the faithless:

“I will remember on thy behalf the kindness of thy youth—

The joy of thine espousals—

How thou wentest out after Me into the wilderness,

Into a land not sown.”

And after the disasters foreseen by Jeremiah had occurred, when Jerusalem lay in ruins and the exiled people seemed to be no more even a people, his successor Ezekiel looked in horror on that “valley of dry bones” and felt his heart ask the question: “Can these dry bones live?” and dared not answer. And the winds of God plunged upon that dead and dusty charnel-house, and the spirit came into them, and they stood up, an army exceeding great. And the Book of Wisdom (iii, 33) goes so far as to make excuses for them even while lessoning them—even those idolators of whom its writer cries that—

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“Either fire, or wind, or rushing air,  
Or circling stars or raging water or the  
lamps of heaven,  
They thought to be gods, rulers of the  
world.

Well, if it was through delight at their beauty  
that they took them to be gods,  
Let them know how much better than  
these is their Sovereign Lord,  
For the first Author of Beauty created  
them.

And if it was through astonishment at their  
power and influence,  
Let them understand how much more  
powerful is He that formed them.”

He gladly acknowledges that it may be the very beauty, the very majesty, of created things that has enthralled men and kept them captive, while they searched for God, even when he insists that being able to do so much, appreciate so much, they should not have stopped short but have persevered till *He* was reached who is the source of all existence, majestic and meaner too.

I would then first ask that we remember this about our fellow-men, and refrain from angry or contemptuous criticism. Deploable as the sects may seem to us as substitutes for God, His Christ and His Church,

you have to remember that men were *first* robbed of these, and that their "many inventions" were far rather the palliative for a vast loneliness and anyhow are so when they are produced to-day. Men have not known by experience what the Church is, or the Christian life, and they are positively hypnotised into believing that those things have been tried and found wanting and that it is at any rate no good looking in the Catholic direction. But their lives have "trailed so long on a broken wing" that they welcome anything at all that seems able to lift them up a little. Be more sympathetic with the effort to find, than scornful of the failure to find—even with the pathetic caricature of that which alone, when found, is fully worth the finding. How easy and over-done are the self-satisfied novels that mock, say, at our suburban villas, named Chatsworth, Arundel and what not, and the derisive catalogues of their sham lace, their artificial porcelain, their aspidistra, even their ready-made cocktails. There is a certain appreciation in all those flimsy fakes, an ambition, no mere sitting-down under the snubs of circumstance. Nor will I mock at those who, knowing nothing of God's palace, have to decorate as best they can the lodging-houses of the spirit. Nor will I arrogate to

myself the right to be very stern with them on the often-quoted grounds that St. Paul was stern, or St. John, or that Christ flogged the Pharisees. When I dare believe that my life, my intention, my vision, are so pure as *theirs* was, and that in rebuking another I am deriving no personal satisfaction for myself, nor finding in my very religion an excuse for anger or contempt or flippancy, then perhaps I might venture upon that severity which makes me tremble, now, if I think I ought to use it. Yet even then, may I never use that sarcasm or savagery which I have in bitterness to repent if ever, now, I succumb to it.

Indeed, to be true to our Lenten ideal of sincerity, if we feel the need of being severe let us turn our eyes homeward and observe indeed with bitterness what a tragedy it is if a Catholic cannot or anyhow does not in any way convey to his fellow-men the beauty and the transcendent desirability of the Catholic life and the Catholic Faith. God forgive us if we are in our own persons their caricature. Indeed you meet people who are almost proud of having got through a dinner-party without being recognised as Catholics, and imagine that tact is what they have been displaying. There are those who downright emphasise all that in them is



identical with what is in their non-Catholic neighbour, not in the least out of charity, that they may find a common ground on which *first* to stand that forthwith they may lead him further, but out of conceit, that they may appear broad-minded, and even, because in their hearts they do not very much esteem those possessions of theirs which are not shared by others, and do not appreciate the chasm that exists between the supernatural Catholic life and even the most ethical of other lives. That is not to be broad-minded, but shallow-minded. That is not to be sympathetic, but lax. That is not to bridge the chasm, but to meet the other man on his side of the chasm and to leave your heart if not your life there.

The Baptist sent messengers to Christ, to ask whether He were indeed the One who was to come, or must they "wait for another." His sole answer was: "Look at Me. Look at My life. Go and say what you have seen." Again, we dare not say quite simply what Christ said. We cannot appeal so unmitigatedly to ourselves. But we do say, and we do claim, that we possess the unique treasure, the incomparable Pearl. We do say that there is but one Saviour of mankind, and His one Church, and that it is ours, or rather, that we are its. Well, then, when

men come to us and say: "Are you indeed the people? are you what the world has longed for and is so atrociously in need of? Or have we to look further? must we seek elsewhere?" What dare we answer? "Look at us! Look at me!" Is the value of our life, then, so self-evident? Having Mary and Holy Communion in our lives, as they have not, is our chastity manifestly such as theirs is not? Having the Crucifix ever before us, as they have it not, is our patience in suffering, nay, our joy in grief, what theirs has no such cause to be? Having our heaven before us, do we sit lightly to material goods, and face death fearlessly, as do not they? Having a clear doctrine of truth and value, do we bring all things unhesitatingly to that test, and judge opinions and attractions forthwith in the light of our faith, as others have no chance of doing?

There is only one answer to that. And if we are seeking for reasons why England is not converted, let us invariably *begin* by assigning our own shortcomings as a primary reason, for were we what we should be, our light, which would be Christ's, would so shine before men, that they would be utterly unable to take it, as they do, for but one among many will-o'-the-wisps that tremble above life's marshes. We have

indeed a minority of Catholics who devote themselves to the work of conversions, and form societies, and contribute money, time and labour: that is good; but had we perhaps no single society, but had a Saint or half a score of Saints, different indeed would be our harvest.

Nor can I leave out one possibility—that Catholics not only may be colourless, or discoloured, but may allow the Faith so to fade out of them altogether that they become positively antagonistic to Christ's Church, and leave it. What bitterness far too bitter for reproach must be his, who witnesses such a tragedy. What must be a priest's heart, or any priestly heart, that wants nothing save that God should have His glory and Christ His triumph, when he sees any such thing? They witness, so far as in them lies, to the worthlessness of the Church and of Jesus Christ. A man whose interests lay in the law-courts once told me that he saw all men in the guise of witnesses. I had been imploring him not to judge a creed wholly by its representatives. "What else can I do?" he asked. "I look at you, and I look at X, who has left you. You witness to the worth of the thing you believe in; he, to its worthlessness. If he finds he cannot live without it, he will make me think the better of *your* evidence.

If you weaken by so much as one jot, you tend to convince me that *he* is right." Probing and poignant consideration! Almost intolerable burden of responsibility! I cried aloud that I was no advertisement for the Faith. "You are," he said, "and you must be. What do I know of 'the Church'? If I would see her, I must look at you. If you sink, remember that it is not only you who sink: you drag down maybe hundreds with you. And, you would drag down me. You may not guess it—but *I am attached to you*. Are *you* the ones we long for? or must we wait for who knows what Christ, what Christians, as yet unrevealed?" Remember, they, the Christless world, depend on us: are attached to us more than we guess: sink, and we drag them down: be loyal, and we may prove their only anchorage.

## IV

### BROTHERS AT WAR

*Let every man take heed of his neighbour, and let him not trust in any brother of his; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every friend will walk deceitfully, and a man shall mock his brother. . . And in thy skirts is found the blood of the poor and innocent. Jer. ix, 2.*

Few contradictions are so violent, perhaps, in human history, as the intense conviction of family, clan and race-unity among the ancient Greeks, and their no less intense delight in cheating. And the fortunes of him who first bore the name "Israel," and who bequeathed it to the Chosen People, were founded on his twice over-reaching his brother Esau. The percentage of Old Testament literature, at least when it moralises, that is concerned with the over-reaching of one man by his neighbour, and especially with the oppression of the poor by the rich or powerful, must be very high.

But I doubt whether we need travel outside our own time or our own land in order to get evidence of the appalling strength of that human instinct which in my first sermon of this series I called Self-extension. The instinct to get at all costs; or at least the instinct to keep at all costs. The war was supposed to have taught us many things, among others, that co-operation and not relentless competition was the healthful law of national life. Yet "What," said a policeman to me, some time ago, "do we see? Same old grab: same old graft." I could not possibly put it better than do those six monosyllables. What is most tragic is, that you see it even in those who most wish to alter the outline of our national life. You see the demoralising effect of having public money to spend; in the methods adopted for gaining official posts, and the desperate measures resorted to in order to retain them. The older meaning of Socialism in England at any rate had its attractiveness. Everyone was his neighbour's brother. Everyone was to be embraced in a wide-armed benevolence. It looked very like Christianity. It seemed in fact to be a perfect *body*, as it were, for the Christian spirit to animate. It turned, alas, very soon into the substitution of the State for the individual, instead of

aiming at such a State as that in which each individual might thrive to his utmost. Indeed, not only the individual was sacrificed to the State, but the State of to-day was to be sacrificed to the State of to-morrow. "Do not imagine," said a quite distinguished speaker to me, "that we care for the individual. We live for society, and for the society that is to be." He applied this to eugenics. You were continually to sacrifice yourself for the sake of a generation yet unborn—perhaps never to be born. I asked if that were a principle, holding good everywhere and always. He said: Yes. I replied that this involved the deliberate spoiling of each generation for the sake of the next one. I, for instance, am not to be allowed to reach my full self-hood and well-being, for the sake of my sons' well-being. But then, neither are they to be allowed to reach their complete well-being, because of that of their descendants. Thus no generation could ever make the most or best of itself, because it was to be bidden cripple itself for the sake of a problematical hereafter. "At least," I said, "never criticise Christians who sacrifice some of this world's advantages for the sake of their own future—for the sake of that heaven which you deride."

But this complete effacement of the indivi-

dual in favour of the mass is so doomed not to succeed that it reveals itself as contrary to human nature. To wash out family affection, argued Aristotle, thousands of years ago, in favour of a State that should replace the family, would never issue into more than a sort of "watery good-will." And you observe that the heirs of Socialism, that is, the Communists, do not even profess to keep up that universal ideal. They preach, with the utmost candour, the "class war." A mass of literature is accessible derived from Communist sources, Scotch, American, Russian, all of which is as explicit as possible on this point. To their credit be it said that they do not disguise their intentions. If there is inequality now, if there is hatred or contempt now, there would be the same, and a more violent form of each, were that movement to triumph. It must be a frequent experience in, for example, mining villages or towns, which I love, that those who bear most hardly on men are precisely those who but a year ago were in their rank and file, and have now climbed to be a step or two up the ladder whose rungs are composed of human skulls. Into those skulls they crush the iron nails of their boots. Miners are simple but honourable men: howbeit reluctantly, they recognise that fact when one puts



it to them. Though they may still speak bitterly, and often with full justification, bitterly, of those nearer the top or at the top of the mining hierarchy, they do recognise that the lies and the scorn and the cruelty and the adamant hardness are to be found more truly among those who have but just escaped from suffering these same things themselves. St. Paul declares startlingly that Christ *learnt* through what He suffered. These men have not done so, and do not intend to.

The Christian and Catholic doctrine is clear. We are first and foremost sons of one Father, God, and thereby we all are brothers and form one family. Before God, therefore, our worth is that of sons of such a Father. Our worth depends entirely on our origin, for what it *can* be, and on our appreciation of and acting up to that origin, for what it *is*. We *are*, to start with, what our nature is: and we are, all over again, according to our free development within ourselves of what that nature can become. Grimly significant catch-word—"He is worth a million!" Appalling reversal of due estimate, to suggest that a man is worth what he has got. What you have got has nothing to do with your worth, unless the fact of your getting it or keeping it implies that you do so at the

expense of your neighbour, and then the more you have got the more your worth sinks in the eternal scales.

What follows immediately from this is, that each man has the right in strict justice, to lead a proper human life, and that does not mean non-starvation merely. That individuals should have large fortunes cannot be declared wrong in itself; but if they imply, as taken all in all they usually do, that other individuals should not have enough, they become wrong in the concrete instance, and are theft. The tragedy is, that in very few cases can you anything like apportion guilt. So complicated has life become that it is infinitely difficult for a vast majority of people to make sure whether they possess tainted money or not. Still, that the web of our society is shot through and through with sin, is pretty clear when one can take but an hour's journey, in order to arrive in places that make one's warm room and even one's fresh air, not to mention one's certainty of solid meals composed of genuine food, to afflict one with a sense of almost intolerable guilt. All wrong has sin as its origin, and it makes no difference whether the responsibility be spread out or entangled. We cannot possibly say that *therefore* it does not matter.

It cannot possibly not matter that one may have to alternate between drawing-rooms and tiny cupboards of rooms where the walls positively move with lice, and where, for example, a half-paralysed old woman has to sleep, terrified by the rats that run over her at night. Please do not say that the poor do not mind things that "we" should mind. Perhaps they don't. But there are plenty of things they do mind. I would like to have a book written descriptive of the rôle that *fear* plays in the lives of thousands of such people. You may have that fear of the scampering rats—I hope, when you go to bed to-night, you may recall that others are going to bed or have to face the night in a bed they can never leave, in terror. Terrified, each night. And I would not sink, I hope, to making sensational and harrowing pictures of that sort merely. There is a no less probing fear and sickening of the heart, when you do not know whether your job will last beyond the week; nor foresee the least chance of getting another. Nor where you are to get the next meal or the next bed. Do not say that there always are methods, and that there is always the police. Here, too, you have to reckon with a blind fear of the police, and not everyone knows the methods. I'm sure I don't. And

do not let us assume that we are always being cheated. We may often be: I don't much mind. But sometimes we are not, and there are looks in the eyes that one can recognise, when one has had to say that one can do nothing—that once again the hope of a job must be considered to have failed, and that one doesn't know where a bed is obtainable. And we have not to talk too glibly of the undeserving poor. There are plenty of both, and those gaol-birds with whom our Lord identified Himself couldn't all have been innocent, I suppose.

In view of this appalling sort of fact (which after all is but the shadow of those facts which concern spiritual necessities), and of the complication of any theories which men may form about it, and of our own shortcomings, I can but recall first, the adamant principles of abstract justice, based on the nature of God and the nature of men and women, His children, signed and sealed, that we are; and then, ask you to apply these yourselves to your manner of life.

I would go on to recall to you that united as men are by their nature, we are so made *one thing* in Christ that our unity in Him makes our natural unity seem but a shadow. You must understand the doctrine of Grace. It is a Life so real that not only we, without

Christ, would be but a decapitated corpse, but, Christ without us would consider Himself to be no more alive than a trunkless head is. He prayed that we in Him might be one thing even as "Thou, Father, and I are one thing." We are to Him as the branches of the vine are to the vine-stem: as grains that make one bread; as limbs in a living body—as cells, we should say to-day, in living tissue. St. Paul emphasises this truth with such relentless rigour that he describes *Christ* as still growing; because His Church, His Body, is not yet adult—*He* has not yet reached the full stature of His maturity. So bitterly realist is Paul that he denounces the immoralities of a Christian not, God help us, on hygienic grounds or grounds of self-respect, but because by uniting *ourselves* to wantonness, we take *Christ's* limbs, says he, and make them those of a harlot. And shall I apologise for quoting Paul? Hence with every human man or woman who is a member of Christ's Body, we are in organic communion: and since Christ wishes every living man or woman so to be part of His Body, with each and every one of them we have to wish to be in communion.

We simply dare not initiate a schism in Christ's Body. Each individual who speaks or thinks contemptuously of his fellow-man

does so initiate or aggravate a schism. A schism between men is a getting your nails into Christ's flesh and tearing it apart. Is it unknown that Catholics should go actually from the altar-rails and proceed to tear their fellow-folk to tatters in their talk? Of course it is not unknown. Of what avail such a Communion? Of what avail the private pieties and the eye turned back continually on self and the cataloguings of dusty faults in confession when not only the positive doing of good is scarcely thought of, but when half one's talk does harm? When I hear those accurate reckonings-up of the inevitable faults of every day, the distractions that of course you have, the sensual thoughts that of course brush their malodorous wings across your face, the sometimes feeling irritable, well—I respect that carefulness so far as it leads: but though to catalogue one's virtues is indeed no part of a penitent's duty, yet I certainly do ask myself whether the penitent is trying half so hard to do good and forget about it, as to shun the wrong, and to remember it. When I meet one young man after another who professes to be bored, certainly I wonder what part of his time he spends in flogging his shyness and his selfishness till he is well broken in to an hour per week of service. When I meet one after

another who professes to be broke, so that he has to borrow to pay debts that *I* should call of honour, but that are, as a matter of fact, those that his tailor will not tolerate any longer *unpaid*, I wonder what schooling he has had, that professes to be Catholic, and has left him able quite to disregard the conditions of his fellow-men. You must not disregard your body. You dare not disregard Christ's Body. If you are Christ's Body, so are those others. If you are not—but who can simultaneously call himself a Catholic, and dissociate himself from those others whom the very fact of Catholicism has united irretrievably with himself? Lack of time cannot be adduced. There is time for those of whom I am now thinking for golf or for dancing: and if there is not, well who leads a hermit life altogether? who is not in contact with some "neighbour"? Everyone is. To all such folks "in contact" a duty is owed. You cannot touch, without influencing. May that influence be vitalising, and not deadening, and not infectious and pestilent.

There is this apostolate of inevitable influence, and there is that of prayer. I mention these because, as I said, you can't help influencing; and because, without prayer, not only you would have but little courage to begin anything more exterior and active,



let alone to keep it up, but because the mere works of philanthropy, uninspired by God's Spirit, are not really Christian and have no eternal import. But when I say "pray," do please not think that I am suggesting, as people do, that you should shovel all duties off you by the thought that you have said a Hail Mary for the poor. That would indeed be "to heal the wound of my people frivolously, saying Peace, peace, where there is no peace." Acts prove the sincerity of prayer. We have to pray: "Make me want the right thing. Give me occasions of doing the right thing. Open my eyes to see them. Give me the pluck to take them. Don't let me fool myself. Don't let me bluff You off with these prayers. Do me the honour of giving me, your Christian, a Christian job—and no soft job, please!" That is praying! That is not just "saying prayers" during which you cannot but have distractions! In praying thus, your very distractions become part of your prayer, for you will realise that so to pray still includes all too much of "I." We may be ashamed to talk to God quite so much about ourselves.

But it is difficult to talk to Him about those others, and to insist that something really must be done about it, unless our eyes have seen their lives. We are so made that our



imagination *must* be fed. "If you don't love your brother whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you haven't?" asks St. John; and if you answer that it is just because you have seen your brother that you can't bear him, and that you can tolerate him so long as you don't come too closely into contact with him, that is frank and therefore God likes it. But God will certainly remind you that it is rather a confession—that you can't bear the people whom Christ loves. . . . It is a pity that our tastes and His are so very different. When people announce that they can't feel so very sorry about their sins, they might give a thought to their preferences and their likings and their loves. What do I like? What Christ likes? Seemingly not. Christ and His Christian like opposite things. . . . Isn't that enough to make me not only sorry but quite desperate? What then am I to do? Is there any good in me at all? Could it be true that I *am* just carrying out the technique of my Faith—its knee-drill, its lesson-by-heart? What then shall I do? Oh—state certainly the things in which you may think you have separately and seriously offended God, and then lie down in the ashes because the *good part of your life* is so insipid, so banal and so flabby. Because, as the earlier sermons

suggested, we haven't got the Catholic eye, the Catholic ardour, the Catholic embrace. And having seen that, and the confessional having done its profound but limited work, go off to Communion with an appetite! Give me what I haven't got! Here at least is the positive, the active, that Christ who transfers the fount of His energy from what is outside of you into your heart, so that there the strong and brilliant jet leaps up into everlasting life and sprays forth around you and is for the healing of the world. That is the end of boredom; of languor; then can no day be empty, no prayer perfunctory, no pain disheartening.

And should anyone say—"But you are asking a great deal from me—but surely there is no necessity to do all that—one can be a good Catholic without undertaking all that sort of thing—you can't seriously expect me to give up my evenings or to go doing welfare work or to visit prisons or to haunt hospitals like that one at Ealing full still of disabled soldiers and sailors destined never more to stir from their tragic beds—you don't see *me* refusing a dance because I've got to go and box in an East End club—" Forgive me, but why not? Again and again, we are Christians. Was Christ never tired? Be a little brutal in your realism—did He

spend His evenings dancing or gambling? Put up with me if I ask, even, why He shouldn't have; are such things wrong? No. Or they need not be. When occasion called for it, Christ went to dinner-parties, like the one with Matthew, a raw convert, and what is more, a party of social pariahs, not even the "half-world." But with one vast gesture He sweeps aside the selfish. "I came not to have servants, but to serve." Call this crude, if you like: say, if you will, that it is in very bad taste. I hope it isn't. But almost anything rather than that we should live by the dead formula; and God forbid what Jeremias said held good for his own day, "an appalling and horrible thing is come to pass in the land—the prophets prophesy falsely, from the prophet even to the priest everyone dealeth falsely—they have healed the wound of my people frivolously, and my people love to have it so—and what will it be in the end thereof?" And should you feel in consequence of all this that you ought to "do something," as they say, and don't know how to begin, why, buy or borrow the Catholic Directory, and read no more than three pages. There you will see the list of Catholic activities going on in this arch-diocese; and it would indeed be strange if you have to say that there is nothing there—nothing there at all—to which you could

lend a hand; that in regard of it all, you are genuinely quite incompetent.

Of course you are not. And do not feel as if I had been nagging at you. I know perfectly well into what perspective these things must needs fall for you. But I am sure that Christianity gains nothing by being put forward as an easy option; you will not even be happy if you never put a strain upon your spiritual muscles: how, if your Christian life be habitually an easy-going thing, will you be able to survive in an hour of crisis? would you so much as enter a Gethsemani? That, I think, is why we witness all too often the collapse; the giving-out; the evaporation of conviction, the inability to be loyal. In my last sermon, next Sunday, please God I shall speak of that infinite forbearance and tenderness and gentle wisdom of our God which comes to the rescue of our weakness: all that I now ask is that you should never think that because you are weak, both to desire and to attempt, you are committed to inertia or unsuccess: God, cries Paul, has chosen the weak things of this world, by preference; nay, when I realise my weakness, and turn, because of it, to God, then am I strong, with His almighty strength, and if I strain and struggle, it shall be "according to the measure of that energy of *His* that energises so mightily in me."

## V

### HOW GOOD IS GOD TO ISRAEL!

*But I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord: thoughts of peace, and not of affliction. . . Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Jer. xxix: xxxi.*

I wish to end these sermons, which have chosen stern texts, with what shall put us, please God, more into that state of heart and mind that befits a Christian people—one, that is, of trustfulness, peacefulness, and strong and happy love both of God and of our fellows. The exquisite words of Jeremias that I have just quoted, like those no less tender that I quoted before—"I remember on thy behalf the kindness of thy youth"—are as essential to the message of that tragic prophet as they are to the whole understanding of the history of God's People. If there is one substantial element in the whole of it, it is the *absolute reliability of God*. God's good faith is pledged. In *Leviticus* God piles

up the dreadful catalogue of His People's sins, but concludes: "And yet for all that I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them, for I am The Lord, their God—I am The Lord" (xxvi, 44): and in the noble hymn of Deuteronomy (xxxii) you read how—

He found him in a desert land,  
In the waste howling wilderness;  
He compassed him round about—He  
cared for him—

He kept him as the apple of His eye.  
As an eagle that broodeth above her  
nest,

That fluttereth over her young,  
He spread abroad His wings, He lifted  
them,

He bare them on His pinions,  
The Lord alone did lead them.

And He who "gathers the lambs in His arms, and carries them in His bosom, and gently leads those that are with young," is He too who sent His Messiah not to destroy, but to fulfil, "to preach good tidings to the poor, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to proclaim to the captives liberty" (Is. xl, 11; xxi, 1).

Since then these grave prophets reveal

themselves as no less tender-hearted than they are stern, and as perceiving in God that Fount of Loving-Kindness, to use our beautiful old English word, which justifies their own long-suffering, you will realise from the outset that in what we shall say or think of God is no manner of softness or complaisance; and that for ourselves we shall be alert not to mistake laxity for understanding, nor shallowness for broad-mindedness, nor an invertebrate adaptability for unselfishness. All that is selfish, we must yield and sacrifice: but never must we succumb. And this is based on that absolute Holiness, as on that unfathomable lovingness of God, which issues in fact both into the austerity and the gentleness of our Christian Faith. Hence from the countenance of Christ we must take neither the gravity, nor the sweetness; and again, while to-day\* more than ever we must insist that He died upon a Cross and that from the heart of His Church the Cross will never be uprooted, and that His wounds are struck into the very fibre of the Christian life, we persistently remember that He Himself defined His very purpose, the end and aim of His coming thus—I am come, said He, that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

\* Passion Sunday, March 25

On this date of March 25, when normally we celebrate the greatest event of all the world's history, the Annunciation and, in consequence of Mary's acceptance of God's offer, the Incarnation, it becomes a second time inevitable that we should fix our eyes upon Him who is the centre of our Faith, the Eternal Son of God made Man—nor indeed are we, Christians, any more intended, now, to reach or even approach to God, save through Him. And already in this initial mystery you perceive what I said, that absolute purity and simplicity which is never chill, never repelling, though in truth austere; and the flowering therein of a motherhood that the grateful hearts of men have ever since done homage to as the very type, the ideal, of motherhood, motherhood itself. So, anything else that ever has made or will make motherhood beautiful and I daresay more beautiful than anything else we are ever likely to see upon this earth, is found first, and at its loveliest, in the flawless child who while remaining virgin became a mother for all the world. For inasmuch as we, by grace, are incorporated into Jesus, or are at least called so to be incorporate, we cannot but be children of her who was His mother. Never forget how creative a thing is purity; how at the root of to-day's com-



memoration lies the doctrine that sinlessness, as the Christian thinks of it, is never merely negative, never barren, and how always sin destroys or spoils or sterilises. So much then to ensure that to-day shall not have passed without our having offered awe-struck homage in presence of this one child out of all history who was chosen to be Mother of God's Son, who on her side passed without shock from being just one child in one little town lost on an Eastern hillside into a region of imperishable immensities, and whose face was the first thing seen by Him who owing to *her* was enabled to contemplate His own creation through created eyes. "Holy and Immaculate Virginity," the Church cries out, "with what words to praise thee, I know not: for Him whom the heavens could not hold, thou claspest in thy breast."

Jesus Christ is given by the goodness of God to the world that He may help our sight. We spoke first, in these sermons, of the all-importance of seeing, and seeing straight and so far as may be, clear. Our Lord says of Himself, that no man fully knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son shall choose to reveal Him. These tremendous words assure us that the power of seeing is not wounded out of us: it exists,

even though weakened. They imply moreover that there is something for us to look at—to use our sight upon—indeed, that we may dare and must aspire to look upon God Himself, to *see* Him, that is, to have our mind *true* about Him. By thus speaking He, as it were, turns our head towards that at which we must look—for, if our backs be turned, if we stare anywhere but in the right direction, after all we shall not see! But there is one more thing necessary, if we are to see even that which is there, and towards which our opened eyes are turned, and that is Light. And triumphantly our Lord declares that *He is* that Light, the True Light on its way into the world, the Light that no darkness ever can subdue. “In Thy Light shall we see light.” That is almost our own colloquialism—to “see light at last.” Looking at things, be they our own selves, or the world and its past and present, and even God, as Christ teaches us to look at them, we shall find mystery still, for Truth is inexhaustible: but the hateful and unanswerable riddle, No. As Christians then we act not only prudently, but with elementary loyalty, if we face up to life’s problems *as* Christians, first and last, and leave frankly to one side all other methods.

Another great focus of the divine *Unselfish*

*Egotism* of the gospels consists in these words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you." Notice that He emphatically does not say: "I will give you nothing to do. You will have no work. You may be henceforth idle." He promises that refreshment that sends you forth like, precisely, a "giant refreshed." For would we but believe it, we contain, as I hinted, gigantic powers, all of us. Why, I doubt whether there is anything insignificantly forceful in the material world itself. Look at the atom, and what we have been learning about its terrific potency. So for the soul of man, only yet more truly; for again, we are learning, I think, more and more about the sheer psychic force of man—the almost miraculous way in which mind can sway mere matter. But be all that as it may, we now know that we are allowed to put ourselves into vital contact with the very source of supernatural power; and that is what we go to Communion for—to get what we have not, and to offer what we have and are—our so weak actuality, and our great power to respond: our ability to "do all things" in Him who strengtheneth us. St. Paul combines these two resplendent doctrines in the first chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, where he prays that God will give them—

a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him—pour light on to the eyes of your heart so that you may know what is the hope to which He calls you—what is the wealth of His inheritance among the saints, what is the overwhelming greatness of His *power* towards you who believe . . . for it is on the scale of the energy of the might of His strength, that He made to act in the Person of Christ, by raising Him from the dead and seating Him on His right hand in the heavens, high above all rule and dominion and power and lordship and every name that can be named, not only in this life but in the next. Yes, all things hath He set under His feet, and Him hath He placed as the Head Supreme for the Church—that is, His Body—the full-filling of Him who is fulfilling Himself, fully, in all things.

These last words provide the transition to what makes the climax of St. Paul's doctrine, and St. John's, and of the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is, that men are so gathered together in Him, or at very lowest are so *meant* to be gathered together into Him, that as we have kept saying no union such as family, or clan, or nationality or race, can compare with that new unity which is

established in Jesus Christ. There exists no more Jew versus Greek, nor cultured, nor barbarian, nay, nor male nor female, once the fountain of our life is thus altered. "He willed," says St. Paul, "to bring all things as to a head in Christ, seeing that *in Him* we have our lot assigned to us." Impossible then to regard any living soul as alien. We praise the pagan poet who declared that he reckoned "nothing human alien to him": but what reason had he for thinking thus, compared to ours?

I know that we seldom make use of this great doctrine of our faith: yet it is its fundamental doctrine, and without it, we simply have not begun to understand Christianity. Perhaps the gravest manifestation of this is our habitual idea of Holy Communion as an intimate act beyond all others personal and private, between us and our Lord. That is indeed better than to think of it as a mere external duty—an action carried through because we are ordered to do it—a "going to one's duties," as we say, comparable in nature to any other command that the Church may issue to us. But it is more and essentially more than a private and personal transaction. It is social in its very origin, social in its upshot. It symbolises, implies, re-creates, intensifies, a super-real

one-ness between those who share in that one food. 'I live,' says St. Paul, "*I* no longer—but Christ lives in me." And reciprocally, I am by dint first of grace, and then of that Communion that redoubles grace, "in Christ," to use the tiny phrase beyond all others characteristic of St. Paul. But if my life and Christ's are thus intertwined, my life must be intertwined no less with that of each whose life is equally intertwined with Christ's. When God looks at His Son, He sees ourselves; when He looks towards us, in us He sees His Son. Impossible, then, however much in our perversity we might desire it, to exclude from that unity any soul soever. If you are not filled, dear brethren, with the conviction that this vast fact is true (and no wonder if anything so transcendent escapes the unaccustomed mind and imagination), ask, re-ask, ask often and confessedly without understanding all that you are asking: for how should God *not* wish to give us overflowingly His best gift of all, and see realised in us the one thing for which He created man at all, seeing that "by means of Christ, and unto Christ, all things were created . . . and in Himself do all things hold together." Use the humblest images—think of a mass of sawdust, that one glue catches up and constructs into a

ball! Do not be afraid of any such crudity! Use it, and tell yourselves forthwith that this is nothing to the way in which the *unity* which God intends is struck into the chaotic elements of the world. And then energise your metaphor, and see the innumerable atoms of a metal wire, *electrified*. One force streams through the whole—the wire is *electrified* and acts as one new thing. So, and far more than so, do the presence of Christ and the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost make of us one thing, and a thing of power, a thing alive with an unparalleled vitality. Once more, when you go to Communion, say in your simplicity: "Give me all that you mean me to receive. Do not stint me, because I cannot understand all that I am asking. Take your divine initiative! Make me, O God, partaker of His Divinity, who in my humanity has not disdained to share."

But in conclusion, let us return to our starting-point to-day, which lay in no such dazzling regions of mystery as we have been speaking of—or rather, the mystery indeed was there, but veiled enough, since what was there to see but a young girl kneeling, and had we not been told, how should we have guessed what was passing in her soul? Even when her child was born, the glory was veiled, how deeply, in this our



poor humanity—"from glory unto glory," the Scripture sings, from one eternity of glory to another—but, between, lies Bethlehem, thank God, and all that we may learn of Christ's gentle life amongst us, neither crying nor striving, quenching no flickering wick, breaking no bruised reed. He who was to teach, is seen sitting Himself among the learned men, not abashing them, but listening and asking questions, so that even this modest beginning filled them with that awe which is itself the beginning of true wisdom. And when at last He came into the open, and preached aloud, He started ever from such words, such thoughts, as His fellow-countrymen possessed, and overwhelmed them with no unmanageable lore. So with us: He starts with what we are, what we have come, by to-day, to be; He asks our conscience tiny questions: He wishes us just to use what now we know, use it a little better than heretofore. To the loyal, light comes with vast acceleration. Watch Him again in His miracles of strengthening. He takes the sick woman by the hand, and the dead girl by the hand. He helps them up; He is anxious that they should give the child something to eat; you would have said that the one thing He cared about was that the multitudes who had come to listen to Him should not faint by the way as



they returned. And lest we should think that even in this, even in His pity for fatigue, *He* was somehow outside our life and our experience, Mark tells us how our Lord, for once too exhausted to tug at the oar Himself, was asleep in the little cabin of the boat, His head upon a pillow. And once again, so tired out by the long morning's tramp, He was fain to ask His friends to go on into the city and buy food, and Himself sat—"like that," says St. John, with thrilling realism, on the stone step, under the shade, beside the ancient well. "Wiser than men," says Paul, "is God's folly, and stronger than men, His weakness." And watch Him finally in the simple groups within which He found Himself, first of all His home, and then His chosen friends. Do not imagine that the perfect love He felt and showed was easy. It could not have been easy to live among cousins who, as you read, thought Him crazed when He began His public ministry. Nor was it easy to live among apostles who to the very verge of Pentecost could not be brought to understand His meaning, and still thought, after the Ascension itself, that He meant to make himself king in Palestine, and oust the Roman, and make them His ministers. Above all it was not easy to see His people, that He loved, and towards

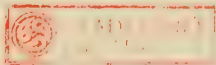
whom He owed and gave, as He confessed, His chief and desperately earnest endeavours, leaving His side—"will *you also* go away?" He said, how sadly, to the Twelve—and in the end making their fatal choice, and rejecting Him. Above all, it was not easy to endure that Passion on which, that your thought may be riveted, the Church causes all religious emblems to be veiled as from to-day. The Agony in the Garden, which was but the climax of that tempting which attended Him all His whole life through, is the grave proof of this.

Begin, then, your healing work in the very simplest way. Make sure of your union with our Lord, whose cross you bear upon your foreheads, by whose special sacrament you have been confirmed, whose own healing you experience in the confessional, and whose dear companionship you possess at all hours through the grace that binds you to Him and Him to you, and that you make closer and ever closer by Communion. Remember that even as He is with you, so He is, or wishes to be, with every man or woman living. Seek then no distant area for your service of Him. *Mean* quite simply to serve *Him* in *them*. Behave to them as affectionately, and as reverently, and as unselfishly as you can, as to *Him*. Tell Him

this. And when you feel you cannot, or find you are forgetting, ask for a renewal of His most Holy Spirit, and ask Mary that you may ever better appreciate and recognise and serve her Son. How should such a Mother not rejoice to hear that prayer? Then will you experience throughout your lives how good is God to Israel, to that Chosen People which, to-day, you form.

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